



*A Century of Service to Christ and Community*

## Trinity Methodist Church

*Centennial Year 1959*

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TEL. BIRKELAW 3-3278

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ALAN GEYER  
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MINISTER OF YOUTH  
MARSHALL GILMORE  
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TEL. FRONTIER 7-9847

MINISTER OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS  
KIM JEFFERSON  
418 ELMOUR AVENUE  
TEL. TALBOT 4-2784

23 February 1960

Mr. Stanley Winters  
26 Shanley Avenue  
Newark 8, New Jersey

Dear Stan:

I was very glad for your kind and cordial letter concerning the Fourth Annual Birthday Party of the Clinton Hill Neighborhood Council last Sunday. It was the easiest thing in the world for me to offer a sincere welcome to the Council on this occasion.

You might have taken exception (which you graciously do not!) to my comment about the interest of Trinity Church and the numbers of our people in the Council. As you know, I am personally concerned to keep the Council a genuinely inter-faith movement - at almost, if not quite, any cost. However, we try to fortify, in as many ways as possible, our members' participation in community life with the distinctive resources which we believe the Christian faith provides.

For another reason I am glad your letter arrived today because I have been thinking about last Friday night and the kind of letter I think I need to write you with regard to some of your remarks at the Council Assembly meeting. I fully agree that the independence and integrity of the Council are indispensable to its effective action. At the same time, institutional leadership has its own independence and integrity to maintain and, for the ministry, this means a distinctive role in the reconciliation of alienated or estranged persons or groups, regardless of where fault or blame may lie. For our staff, since the start of our program in 1955, this kind of role has at times caused us to be regarded with great suspicion by some public officials and community leaders (even, and to say, some other churches); at other times, including Friday night, the impression has been created that we should be suspected by even such a group as the Neighborhood Council because of personal relationships which exist with city officials. This is a difficult tight rope to walk at times and doubtless we make errors of judgment, but the Neighborhood Council must never lose sight of the fact that the strength it derives from institutional members comes precisely because those institutions freely and voluntarily participate in the Council while maintaining their own special pattern of work in the community.

Mr. Stanley B. Winters

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23 February 1960

So, I had reason to be doubly appreciative of your appreciative letter, and I hope that you are appreciative of my appreciation of your appreciative letter.

Stay loose!

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Al", with a horizontal line extending to the left.

Alan Geyer

AG:vlr